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UTILITY APPLICATION FOR UNITED STATES PATENT

FOR

BIOMETRIC RECOGNITION APPARATUS

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Specification

Biometric Recognition Apparatus

Technical Field

5 The present invention relates to a technique of detecting and recognizing a living body and, more particularly, to a biometric recognition technique of determining whether or not an object is a living body, when performing individual recognition by detecting
10 biometric information such as a fingerprint from the object.

Background Art

 With the progress of information-oriented society, techniques for the security protection of
15 information processing systems have advanced. For example, ID cards have been used for entrance control for a computer room. However, there is a high chance that an ID card will be lost or stolen. For this reason, an individual recognition system has begun to be
20 introduced, in which the fingerprints of individuals or the like are registered in advance instead of ID cards, and are collated at the time of entrance to the room.

 In such an individual recognition system, an unauthorized person may pass a check by creating a
25 replica of a registered fingerprint. For this reason, an individual recognition system needs to recognize whether an object is a living body, as well as

performing fingerprint collation.

Conventionally, as a biometric recognition technique of detecting whether an object is a living body, a technique like that shown in Fig. 45 which uses impedance matching with an object has been proposed (see, for example, Japanese Patent Laid-Open No. 2000-172833). This biometric detection apparatus comprises an oscillation unit 73 which outputs a high-frequency signal, an electrode unit 70 of a non-resonant circuit formed from an electrode 71 to which the high-frequency signal from the oscillation unit 73 is applied and with which an object makes contact, a detection unit 74 which outputs a reflected wave signal corresponding to a change in the impedance of the electrode unit 70, a determination unit 76 which compares the reflected wave signal from the detection unit 74 with a predetermined reference signal to determine whether or not the object which contacts the electrode 71 is a living body, and a reference signal setting unit 75 in which a reference signal for determination whether or not the object is a living body is set in advance and which supplies the reference signal to the determination unit 76.

In this biometric detection apparatus, the oscillation unit 73 supplies a high-frequency signal to the electrode unit 70. The object is a living body such as a finger, and the impedance of the electrode unit 70

changes when the object contacts the electrode 71.

Assume that when a human body contacts the electrode unit 70, the impedance of the object side matches the impedance on the input side of the electrode unit 70.

5 In this case, if an object is a human body, the reflected wave of a high-frequency signal decreases due to the above impedance matching. The detection unit 74 detects this reflected wave. The determination unit 76 then compares it with the reference signal. If the
10 reflected wave is lower than the detection level, it is determined that a human body has contacted the electrode unit.

Disclosure of Invention

Problems to be Solved by the Invention

15 Such a conventional technique, however, uses the principle of determination of a reflected wave level based on impedance matching, and requires external parts such as an inductance and capacitance for the detection unit 74 which detects the reflected wave of a supplied
20 high-frequency signal in addition to a transformer 72 for impedance matching for the electrode unit 70.

A larger number of parts are therefore required. This makes it difficult to reduce the size of the apparatus, and increases the manufacturing cost. In
25 addition, since it is easy to read out detection signals from interconnections which connect parts or estimate biometric determination conditions on the basis of the

element values of external parts so as to perform fraudulent biometric recognition, satisfactory security cannot be ensured.

The present invention has been made to solve the above problems, and has as its object to provided a biometric recognition apparatus which can minutely detect an electrical characteristic of an object without requiring any inductance or capacitance such as a transformer for impedance matching to be used for the measurement of a reflected wave or increasing the apparatus size, and can easily reduce the apparatus size and form the apparatus into a chip.

Means of Solution to the Problems

A biometric recognition apparatus according to the present invention comprises a detection element which electrically contacts an object, a supply signal generating unit which generates an AC supply signal, a response signal generating unit which includes a resistive element connected between the supply signal generating unit and the detection element, applies the supply signal to the detection element through the resistive element, extracts, from one terminal of the resistive element, a response signal containing not less than one individual parameter which changes depending on whether or not the object is a living body, and outputs the signal, a waveform information detection unit which detects at least one of the individual parameters as

waveform information from the response signal, and
outputs a detection signal representing the waveform
information, and a biometric recognition unit which
determines on the basis of the detection signal whether
5 or not the object is a living body.

Effects of the Invention

According to the present invention, a
predetermined supply signal is applied to the detection
element through the resistive element, and a response
10 signal is extracted, which contains at least one
individual parameter which changes depending on whether
or not an object which is in contact with the apparatus
through the detection element is a living body. It is
then determined on the basis of the detection signal
15 indicating at least one individual parameter from the
response signal whether or not the object is a living
body. This makes it possible to detect an electrical
characteristic of an object by using a phase comparison
circuit such as a general comparator or logic circuit,
20 which is a very simple circuit arrangement as compared
with the prior art, without requiring a resistive
element or capacitive element which requires a large
area. This in turn can easily realize a reduction in
the size of the biometric recognition apparatus and the
25 formation of a chip.

Brief Description of Drawings

Fig. 1 is a block diagram showing the

arrangement of a biometric recognition apparatus according to the first embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 2 is a block diagram showing the arrangement of a biometric recognition apparatus according to the second embodiment of the present invention;

Figs. 3A to 3D are signal waveform charts showing signals at the respective components of the biometric recognition apparatus in Fig. 2;

Fig. 4 is a block diagram showing the arrangement of a biometric recognition apparatus according to the third embodiment of the present invention;

Figs. 5A and 5B are signal waveform charts showing signals at the respective components of the biometric recognition apparatus in Fig. 4;

Fig. 6 is a block diagram showing the arrangement of a biometric recognition apparatus according to the fourth embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 7 is a block diagram showing the arrangement of a biometric recognition apparatus according to the fifth embodiment of the present invention;

Figs. 8A to 8F are signal waveform charts showing signals at the respective components of the

biometric recognition apparatus in Fig. 7;

Fig. 9 is a block diagram showing the arrangement of a biometric recognition apparatus according to the sixth embodiment of the present
5 invention;

Figs. 10A to 10E are signal waveform charts showing signals at the respective components of the biometric recognition apparatus in Fig. 9;

Fig. 11 is a block diagram showing the
10 arrangement of a biometric recognition apparatus according to the seventh embodiment of the present invention;

Figs. 12A to 12D are signal waveform charts showing signals at the respective components of the
15 biometric recognition apparatus in Fig. 11;

Fig. 13 is a block diagram showing the arrangement of a biometric recognition apparatus according to the eighth embodiment of the present invention;

20 Figs. 14A to 14D are signal waveform charts showing signals at the respective components of the biometric recognition apparatus in Fig. 13;

Fig. 15 is a block diagram showing the arrangement of a biometric recognition apparatus
25 according to the ninth embodiment of the present invention;

Figs. 16A to 16C are signal waveform charts

showing signals at the respective components of the biometric recognition apparatus in Fig. 15;

Figs. 17A and 17B are signal waveform charts showing signals at the respective components of another
5 biometric recognition apparatus;

Fig. 18 is a block diagram showing the arrangement of a biometric recognition apparatus according to the 10th embodiment of the present invention;

10 Figs. 19A to 19D are signal waveform charts showing the operation of detecting a phase difference from a response signal;

Figs. 20A to 20C are signal waveform charts showing the operation of detecting an amplitude from a
15 response signal;

Figs. 21A to 21D are signal waveform charts showing changes in phase difference with changes in frequency;

Figs. 22A to 22D are signal waveform charts
20 showing changes in amplitude with changes in frequency;

Fig. 23 is a view for explaining reference ranges corresponding to recognition index values;

Fig. 24 is a block diagram showing the arrangement of a biometric recognition apparatus
25 according to the 11th embodiment of the present invention;

Figs. 25A to 25C are signal waveform charts

showing changes in phase difference with changes in
elapse time;

Figs. 26A to 26C are signal waveform charts
showing changes in amplitude with changes in elapsed
5 time;

Fig. 27 is a view for explaining reference
ranges corresponding to recognition index values;

Fig. 28 is a block diagram showing the
arrangement of a biometric recognition apparatus
10 according to the 12th embodiment of the present
invention;

Fig. 29 is a view showing an example of the
arrangement of a waveform shaping circuit used in
Fig. 28;

15 Fig. 30 is a view showing an example of the
arrangement of a low-pass filter used in Fig. 29;

Fig. 31 is a view showing an example of the
arrangement of a waveform shaping circuit used in a
biometric recognition apparatus according to the 13th
20 embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 32 is a view showing an example of the
arrangement of an amplitude limiting circuit used in
Fig. 31;

Fig. 33 is a signal waveform chart showing the
25 operation of the amplitude limiting circuit in Fig. 32;

Fig. 34 is a view showing an example of the
arrangement of an amplitude limiting circuit used in a

biometric recognition apparatus according to the 14th embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 35 is a view showing an example of the arrangement of a waveform shaping circuit used in a biometric recognition apparatus according to the 15th embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 36 is a view showing an example of the arrangement of an amplitude limiting low-pass filter used in Fig. 35;

Fig. 37 is a signal waveform chart showing the operation of the amplitude limiting low-pass filter in Fig. 36;

Fig. 38 is a view showing another example of the arrangement of the amplitude limiting low-pass filter used in a biometric recognition apparatus according to the 16th embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 39 is a signal waveform chart showing the operation of the amplitude limiting low-pass filter in Fig. 38;

Fig. 40 is a block diagram showing the arrangement of a biometric recognition apparatus according to the 17th embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 41 is a view showing an example of the arrangement of a waveform shaping circuit used in Fig. 40;

Fig. 42 is a view showing an example of the arrangement of a variable low-pass filter used in Fig. 41;

Fig. 43 is a view showing an example of the arrangement of a variable capacitance circuit used in Fig. 42;

Figs. 44A to 44C are signal waveform charts showing the operation of a supply signal generating unit in Fig. 40; and

Fig. 45 is a view showing an example of the arrangement of a conventional fingerprint collation apparatus.

Best Mode for Carrying Out the Invention

The embodiments of the present invention will be described next with reference to the accompanying drawings.

[First Embodiment]

A biometric recognition apparatus according to the first embodiment of the present invention will be described first with reference to Fig. 1. Fig. 1 is a block diagram showing the arrangement of the biometric recognition apparatus according to the first embodiment of the present invention.

This biometric recognition apparatus is provided with a detection element 1, supply signal generating unit 2, response signal generating unit 3, waveform information detection unit 4, and biometric

recognition unit 5.

The detection element 1 electrically contacts an object 10 through a detection electrode, and connects the capacitive and resistive components of the impedance of the object 10 to the response signal generating unit 3. The supply signal generating unit 2 generates a supply signal 2S formed from a sine wave having a predetermined frequency or the like and outputs it to the response signal generating unit 3. The response signal generating unit 3 has a resistive element R connected between the supply signal generating unit 2 and the detection element 1, and applies the supply signal 2S from the supply signal generating unit 2 to the detection element 1 through the resistive element Rs. The response signal generating unit 3 then outputs, to the waveform information detection unit 4, a response signal 3S which changes in accordance with the output impedance of the detection element 1, i.e., the capacitive and resistive components of the impedance of the object 10, from one terminal of the resistive element Rs, i.e., the node between the resistive element Rs, and the detection element 1.

The waveform information detection unit 4 detects a phase difference or amplitude with respect to the supply signal 2S from the waveform represented by the response signal 3S from the response signal generating unit 3, and outputs a detection signal 4S

containing waveform information representing such a phase difference or amplitude to the biometric recognition unit 5. The biometric recognition unit 5 recognizes/determines, on the basis of the waveform information contained in the detection signal 4S from the waveform information detection unit 4, whether or not the object 10 is a living body, and outputs a recognition result 5S.

The operation of the biometric recognition apparatus according to this embodiment will be described next. When the object 10 contacts the detection element 1, the supply signal 2S applied from the supply signal generating unit 2 to the detection element 1 changes in accordance with the impedance characteristic unique to the object 10, i.e., the capacitive and resistive components. The resultant signal is output as the response signal 3S to the response signal generating unit 3. The phase difference or amplitude of the response signal 3S is detected by the waveform information detection unit 4. The detection signal 4S containing information representing the detection result is then output to the biometric recognition unit 5.

The biometric recognition unit 5 recognizes/determines whether or not the object 10 is a living body, based on whether or not the waveform information contained in the detection signal 4S falls within the reference range of biometric waveform

information of the authentic living body, and outputs the recognition result 5S.

As described above, in this embodiment, the waveform information detection unit 4 is provided to
5 detect waveform information representing the phase difference or amplitude of the response signal 3S, thereby detecting information representing the real or imaginary component of the intrinsic impedance of the object 10. The biometric recognition unit 5 then
10 determines, on the basis of the detected information, whether or not the object 10 is a living body. As compared with the prior art, therefore, an electrical characteristic of the object can be closely examined by a relatively simple circuit arrangement for detecting
15 waveform information. This makes it possible to reduce the size of the biometric recognition apparatus and form it into a chip.

Note that in this embodiment, the phase difference or amplitude contained in the response signal
20 3S can be regarded as one or more individual parameters which change depending on whether the object is a living body. More specifically, the response signal generating unit 3 extracts, from one terminal of the resistive element R_s , i.e., the node between the resistive element
25 R_s , and the detection element 1, the response signal 3S containing one or more individual parameters which change depending on whether the object is a living body.

The waveform information detection unit 4 detects at least one individual parameter from the waveform of the response signal 3S as waveform information, and outputs a detection signal representing the waveform

5 information.

In the above case, therefore, the phase and amplitude of the response signal 3S which change in accordance with the impedance of the object 10 which is in contact with the apparatus through the detection
10 element 1 is used as an individual parameter.

The magnitude of the imaginary or real component of the object may be computed from such a phase difference or amplitude, and may be compared with the reference range of the imaginary or real components
15 of the authentic living body. In this case, the real and imaginary components of the impedance of the object 10 which is in contact with the apparatus through the detection element 1 are used as individual parameters.

[Second Embodiment]

20 A biometric recognition apparatus according to the second embodiment of the present invention will be described next. Fig. 2 is a block diagram showing the biometric recognition apparatus according to the second embodiment of the present invention. The same reference
25 numerals as in Fig. 1 denote the same or equivalent parts in Fig. 2.

This embodiment will exemplify a practical

arrangement of the first embodiment described above, in which a waveform information detection unit 4 detects the phase difference of a response signal 3S as waveform information used for biometric

5 recognition/determination.

Referring to Fig. 2, a detection element 1 is provided with detection electrodes 11 and 12 to electrically contact an object 10. A supply signal generating unit 2 is provided with a frequency
10 generating circuit 21 and waveform shaping circuit 22. A response signal generating unit 3 is provided with a current-voltage conversion circuit 31. A waveform information detection unit 4A is provided with a reference signal generating circuit 41 and phase
15 comparison circuit 42. A biometric recognition unit 5A is provided a signal conversion circuit 51 and a determination circuit 52.

In the detection element 1, the detection electrode 11 is connected to a common potential such as
20 ground potential, and the detection electrode 12 is connected to the output stage of the current-voltage conversion circuit 31 of the response signal generating unit 3. In the supply signal generating unit 2, the frequency generating circuit 21 generates a clock signal
25 having a predetermined frequency, and the waveform shaping circuit 22 generates and outputs a supply signal 2S formed from a sine wave or the like on the basis of a

clock signal from the frequency generating circuit 21.
Note that the supply signal 2S may be supplied from an
external waveform generating device instead of the
supply signal generating unit 2.

5 The current-voltage conversion circuit 31 of
the response signal generating unit 3 is formed from a
resistive element R_s connected between the supply signal
generating unit 2 and the detection element 1. The
current-voltage conversion circuit 31 applies the supply
10 signal 2S to the object 10 with an output impedance
sufficiently lower than that of the living body. The
current-voltage conversion circuit 31 converts a current
flowing in the object 10 through the detection element 1
at this time into a voltage, and outputs it as a
15 response signal 3S.

 The reference signal generating circuit 41 of
the waveform information detection unit 4A outputs a
reference signal 41S synchronized with the supply signal
2S to a phase comparison circuit 42. The phase
20 comparison circuit 42 compares the response signal 3S
with the reference signal 41S to detect an impedance
characteristic unique to the object 10, a phase
difference corresponding to a capacitive component in
this case, and outputs it as a detection signal 4AS. In
25 this case, the supply signal 2S may be used as the
reference signal 41S.

 The signal conversion circuit 51 of the

biometric recognition unit 5 converts the detection
signal 4AS from the phase comparison circuit 42 into a
converted signal 51S which allows easy determination by
the determination circuit 52. The determination circuit
5 52 determines whether the phase difference indicated by
the converted signal 51S from the signal conversion
circuit 51 falls within a phase difference reference
range which indicates the impedance characteristic of
the authentic living body, thereby determining whether
10 or not the object 10 is a living body. The
determination circuit 52 then outputs a recognition
result 5S with respect to the object 10.

The operation of the biometric recognition
apparatus in Fig. 2 will be described next. The object
15 10 is connected to the output stage of the
current-voltage conversion circuit 31 through the
detection electrodes 11 and 12 of the detection element
1. In this case, the intrinsic impedance of the object
10 can be represented by a capacitive component C_f and
20 resistive component R_f connected between the detection
electrodes 11 and 12 of the detection element 1.
Therefore, the supply signal 2S applied from the
current-voltage conversion circuit 31 with a
predetermined output impedance is voltage-divided by the
25 output impedance of the current-voltage conversion
circuit 31 and the intrinsic impedance of the object 10.
The current flowing in the object 10 then changes in

phase or amplitude in accordance with the intrinsic impedance of the object 10. Such a change is converted into a voltage and output as the response signal 3S.

In this embodiment, the phase comparison
5 circuit 42 of the waveform information detection unit 4A compares the phase of the reference signal 41S output from the reference signal generating circuit 41 with that of the response signal 3S, and outputs a detection signal 4AS containing the phase information (phase
10 difference) of the response signal 3S.

Figs. 3A to 3D show signal waveform examples at the respective components in Fig. 2. When a sine wave centered on a common potential such as ground potential is used as the supply signal 2S, the phase of
15 the response signal 3S changes in accordance with the impedance of the object 10. By using a signal synchronized with the supply signal 2S as the reference signal 41S and making the phase comparison circuit 42 compare the phase of the reference signal 41S with that
20 of the response signal 3S, for example, the detection signal 4AS having a phase difference ϕ as a pulse width is output.

Since the phase comparison circuit 42 is provided for the waveform information detection unit 4A
25 to compare the phase of the response signal 3S with that of the reference signal 41S in this manner, a phase which changes in accordance with the intrinsic

capacitive component of the object 10 can be detected as waveform information representing the waveform of the response signal 3S. This makes it possible to minutely detect an electrical characteristic of an object,
5 information representing the imaginary component of the intrinsic impedance of the object 10 in this case, by using a phase comparison circuit such as a general comparator or logic circuit, which is a very simple circuit arrangement as compared with the prior art,
10 without requiring a resistive element or capacitive element which requires a large area. This in turn can easily realize a reduction in the size of the biometric recognition apparatus and the formation of a chip.

[Third Embodiment]

15 A biometric recognition apparatus according to the third embodiment of the present invention will be described next. Fig. 4 is a block diagram showing a biometric recognition apparatus according to the third embodiment of the present invention. The same reference
20 numerals as in Fig. 2 denote the same or equivalent parts in Fig. 4.

The second embodiment described above has exemplified the case wherein the waveform information detection unit 4A detects the phase information
25 representing the capacitive component of the impedance of the object 10, which is contained in the response signal 3S, as the waveform information representing the

imaginary component of the intrinsic impedance of the object 10. The third embodiment will exemplify a case wherein a waveform information detection unit 4B detects the resistive component of the impedance of an object
5 10, which is contained in a response signal 3S, as waveform information representing the real component of the intrinsic impedance of the object 10.

Referring to Fig. 4, the waveform information detection unit 4B is provided with a peak voltage
10 detection circuit 43. The peak voltage detection circuit 43 detects an amplitude change corresponding to the impedance characteristic unique to the object 10, the resistive component in this case, from the response signal 3S, and outputs it as a detection signal 4BS.
15 Practical examples of the peak voltage detection circuit 43 include a sample/hold circuit and the like. The arrangement of the biometric recognition apparatus in Fig. 4 is the same as that shown in Fig. 2 except for the waveform information detection unit 4B, and a
20 detailed description thereof will be omitted.

The operation of the biometric recognition apparatus in Fig. 4 will be described next. The object 10 is connected to the output stage of a current-voltage conversion circuit 31 through detection electrodes 11
25 and 12 of a detection element 1. In this case, the intrinsic impedance of the object 10 can be represented by a capacitive component C_f and resistive component R_f

connected between the detection electrodes 11 and 12 of the detection element 1. A supply signal 2S applied from the current-voltage conversion circuit 31 with a predetermined output impedance is voltage-divided by the output impedance of the current-voltage conversion circuit 31 and the intrinsic impedance of the object 10. The current flowing in the object 10 then changes in phase or amplitude in accordance with the intrinsic impedance of the object 10. Such a change is converted into a voltage and output as the response signal 3S.

In this embodiment, the peak voltage detection circuit 43 of the waveform information detection unit 4B outputs the detection signal 4BS containing the amplitude peak value of the response signal 3S.

Figs. 5A and 5B show signal waveform examples at the respective components in Fig. 4. When a sine wave centered on a common potential such as ground potential is used as a supply signal 2S, the response signal 3S changes in amplitude around the common potential in accordance with the impedance of the object 10. The peak voltage detection circuit 43 detects the peak voltage of the response signal 3S, i.e., the maximum or minimum value of the voltage, and outputs the detection signal 4BS representing a DC potential proportional to an amplitude A of the response signal 3S.

As described above, the waveform information

detection unit 4B is provided with the peak voltage
detection circuit 43 to detect an amplitude which
changes in accordance with the intrinsic resistive
component of the object 10 as waveform information
5 representing the waveform of the response signal 3S.
This makes it possible to minutely detect an electrical
characteristic of an object, information representing
the real component of the intrinsic impedance of the
object 10 in this case, by using a peak voltage
10 detection circuit such as a general sample/hold circuit,
which is a very simple circuit arrangement as compared
with the prior art, without requiring a resistive
element or capacitive element which requires a large
area. This in turn can easily realize a reduction in
15 the size of the biometric recognition apparatus and the
formation of a chip.

[Fourth Embodiment]

A biometric recognition apparatus according to
the fourth embodiment of the present invention will be
20 described next with reference to Fig. 6. Fig. 6 is a
block diagram showing the biometric recognition
apparatus according to the fourth embodiment of the
present invention. The same reference numerals as in
Fig. 1 denote the same or equivalent parts in Fig. 6.

25 The first embodiment described above has
exemplified the case wherein the waveform information
detection unit 4 is provided to detect waveform

information representing phase or amplitude information from the response signal 3S. The fourth embodiment will exemplify a case wherein two waveform information detection units 4A and 4B are provided to concurrently
5 detect waveform information representing phase information and amplitude information from a response signal 3S, thereby performing biometric recognition.

The waveform information detection unit 4A is equivalent to the waveform information detection unit 4A
10 in Fig. 2 described above, and is designed such that a phase comparison circuit 42 compares a reference signal 41S output from a reference signal generating circuit 41 with the response signal 3S to output a detection signal 4AS containing phase information of the response signal
15 3S. The waveform information detection unit 4B is equivalent to the waveform information detection unit 4B in Fig. 4 described above, and is designed such that a peak voltage detection circuit 43 detects the amplitude peak value of the response signal 3S to output a
20 detection signal 4BS containing the peak value.

A signal conversion circuit 51A of a biometric recognition unit 5A converts the detection signals 4AS and 4BS from the waveform information detection units 4A and 4B into converted signals 5AS and 5BS, and output
25 them to a determination circuit 52A. The determination circuit 52A determines whether or not the converted signals 5AS and 5BS from the signal conversion circuit

51A fall within a phase different reference range and amplitude reference range which represent the impedance characteristics of the authentic living body, thereby recognizing/determining whether or not an object 10 is a living body, and outputting a recognition result 5S with respect to the object 10.

As described, in this embodiment, the waveform information detection units 4A and 4B are provided to detect waveform information representing the phase difference and amplitude of the response signal 3S, and the biometric recognition unit 5A determines on the basis of the detected information whether or not the object 10 is a living body. This makes it possible to minutely detect an electrical characteristic of an object, information representing the real and imaginary components of the intrinsic impedance of the object 10 in this case, by using a phase comparison circuit such as a general comparator or logic circuit, which is a very simple circuit arrangement as compared with the prior art, without requiring a resistive element or capacitive element which requires a large area. This in turn can easily realize a reduction in the size of the biometric recognition apparatus and the formation of a chip.

In addition, performing biometric recognition/determination on the basis of information representing both the real and imaginary components of

the impedance of an object makes it very difficult to separately adjust the real component and imaginary component of an object by selecting a material and quality for the object as compared with the case wherein
5 biometric recognition/determination is performed by using information obtained by detecting real and imaginary components as a whole. This can obtain high security against fraudulent recognition activities using an artificial finger and the like. According to the
10 above arrangement which separately detects real and imaginary components, as shown in Fig. 6, the waveform information detection unit 4A detects an imaginary component on the basis of waveform information representing the phase difference of the response signal
15 3S, and the waveform information detection unit 4B detects a real component on the basis of waveform information representing the amplitude of the response signal 3S. However, similar functions and effects can be obtained even if another arrangement is used as an
20 arrangement which separately detects real and imaginary components.

In each of the first to fourth embodiments described above, consider a practical example of the biometric recognition unit 5 or 5A. When, for example,
25 the detection signal 4AS having a pulse width corresponding to phase information is used, the signal conversion circuit 51 or 51A may convert the pulse width

of this signal, and the comparator of the signal
conversion circuit 51 or 51A may compare the voltage
with a phase different reference range defined by
voltages. When a phase difference reference range
5 defined by time lengths is to be used, the gate circuit
of the determination circuit 52 or 52A may directly
compare the detection signal 4AS with a reference pulse
representing the phase different reference range. This
makes it possible to omit the signal conversion circuit
10 51 or 51A.

When the detection signal 4BS having a
potential corresponding to amplitude information is to
be used, the voltage comparator of the signal conversion
circuit 51 or 51A may compare the signal with an
15 amplitude difference reference range defined by
voltages. This makes it possible to omit the signal
conversion circuit 51 or 51A. When an amplitude
reference range defined by time lengths is to be used,
the signal conversion circuit 51 or 51A may convert the
20 voltage into a pulse width, and the gate circuit of the
determination circuit 52 or 52A may compare it with a
reference pulse representing this amplitude reference
range.

According to the above description, the
25 biometric recognition unit 5 or 5A is comprised of an
analog circuit. However, this unit may be comprised of
a digital circuit. For example, the detection signal

4AS or 4BS is A/D-converted by the signal conversion circuit 51 or 51A, and the obtained digital value may be compared with digital information representing a phase different reference range or amplitude reference range
5 by using the determination circuit 52 or 52A.

In this manner, the intrinsic impedance of an object is detected as waveform information representing the waveform of a response signal, and it is determined on the basis of the waveform information whether or not
10 the object is a living body. This makes it possible to form the biometric recognition unit 5 or 5A by using a very simple circuit like that described above and to easily realize a reduction in the size of the biometric recognition apparatus and the formation of a chip. Note
15 that the magnitude of the imaginary or real component of an object may be computed from such a phase difference or amplitude, and the computed magnitude may be compared with the reference range of the imaginary or real components of the authentic living body.

20 [Fifth Embodiment]

A biometric recognition apparatus according to the fifth embodiment of the present invention will be described next with reference to Fig. 7. Fig. 7 is a block diagram showing the arrangement of the biometric
25 recognition apparatus according to the fifth embodiment. Fig. 7 shows the details of examples of the arrangements of the supply signal generating unit 2, response signal

generating unit 3, and waveform information detection unit 4 in the biometric recognition apparatus in Fig. 1.

This biometric recognition apparatus is designed such that a waveform information detection unit 5 4A detects the phase difference between a response signal 3S and a reference signal 42S synchronized with an original supply signal 2S as the above waveform information, and outputs a detection signal 4AS containing the waveform information. Note that the same 10 reference numerals as in the first embodiment (see Fig. 1) denote the same or equivalent parts in the fifth embodiment.

Referring to Fig. 7, a detection element 1 is provided with detection electrodes 11 and 12 to 15 electrically contact an object 10. A supply signal generating unit 2 is provided with a frequency generating circuit 21, waveform shaping circuit 22, and offset removing circuit 23. A response signal generating unit 3 is provided with a current-voltage 20 conversion circuit 31. The waveform information detection unit 4A is provided with a level shift circuit 41, reference signal generating circuit 42, and phase comparison circuit 43.

In the detection element 1, the detection 25 electrode 11 is connected to a common potential such as ground potential, and the detection electrode 12 is connected to the output stage of the current-voltage

conversion circuit 31 of the response signal generating unit 3. This common potential is supplied from a predetermined supply circuit unit (not shown) such as a power supply circuit with a constant potential (low impedance).

In the supply signal generating unit 2, the frequency generating circuit 21 generates a clock signal having a predetermined frequency, and the waveform shaping circuit 22 generates an AC shaping signal 22S formed from a repetitive waveform such as a sine wave or triangular wave on the basis of the clock signal from the frequency generating circuit 21 and outputs it to the offset removing circuit 23. The offset removing circuit 23 removes a DC potential difference between the common potential and the central potential of the shaping signal 22S, i.e., an offset, from the shaping signal 22S to generate the supply signal 2S whose central potential coincides with the common potential, and outputs it. Note that the supply signal 2S may be supplied from an external waveform generating device instead of the supply signal generating unit 2.

The current-voltage conversion circuit 31 of the response signal generating unit 3 applies the supply signal 2S to the object 10 with a predetermined output impedance sufficiently lower than the impedance of the living body. In this case, the current-voltage conversion circuit 31 converts the current flowing in

the object 10 through the detection element 1 into a voltage and outputs it as the response signal 3S.

In order to make the central potential of the response signal 3S, which coincides with the common
5 potential, coincide with a predetermined reference potential, the level shift circuit 41 of the waveform information detection unit 4A level-shifts the overall DC bias of the signal, and outputs the resultant signal as a to-be-compared signal 41S to the phase comparison
10 circuit 43. The reference signal generating circuit 42 outputs a reference signal 42S synchronized with the supply signal 2S to the phase comparison circuit 43. The phase comparison circuit 43 compares the phase of the to-be-compared signal 41S with that of the reference
15 signal 42S to detect a phase difference corresponding to an intrinsic impedance characteristic of the object 10, a capacitive component in this case, as waveform information, and outputs the detection signal 4AS containing the waveform information. In this case, the
20 supply signal 2S may be used as the reference signal 42S.

The biometric recognition unit 5 determines whether or not the phase difference represented by the detection signal 4AS from the phase comparison circuit
25 43 falls within a phase difference reference range representing an impedance characteristic of the authentic living body, thereby recognizing/determining

whether or not the object 10 is a living body. The biometric recognition unit 5 then outputs a recognition result 5S with respect to the object 10.

The operation of the biometric recognition apparatus according to this embodiment will be described next. The object 10 is connected to the output stage of the current-voltage conversion circuit 31 through the detection electrodes 11 and 12 of the detection element 1. The intrinsic impedance of the object 10 can be represented by a capacitive component C_f and resistive component R_f connected between the detection electrodes 11 and 12 of the detection element 1. Therefore, the supply signal 2S applied from the current-voltage conversion circuit 31 with a predetermined output impedance is voltage-divided by the output impedance of the current-voltage conversion circuit 31 and the intrinsic impedance of the object 10. The current flowing in the object 10 then changes in phase or amplitude in accordance with the intrinsic impedance of the object 10. Such a change is converted into a voltage and output as the response signal 3S.

In this embodiment, the phase comparison circuit 43 of the waveform information detection unit 4A compares the phase of the to-be-compared signal 41S with the reference signal 42S output from the reference signal generating circuit 42, and outputs the detection signal 4AS containing the phase information (phase

difference) of the response signal 3S.

In this case, if there is an offset between a common potential such as ground potential connected to the detection electrode 11 of the detection element 1 and the supply signal 2S applied to the detection electrode 12, since a DC current flows in the object 10, an offset corresponding to the resistive component R_f of the object 10 also occurs in the response signal 3S. In this embodiment, the offset removing circuit 23 is provided for the supply signal generating unit 2 to remove the offset between the supply signal 2S and the common potential to suppress the application of a DC current to the object 10 and prevent the occurrence of an offset in the response signal 3S.

In addition, the level shift circuit 41 is provided for the waveform information detection unit 4A to level-shift the response signal 3S so as to generate the to-be-compared signal 41S whose central potential coincides with a reference potential. A phase difference is detected by using the to-be-compared signal 41S.

Figs. 8A to 8F show signal waveform examples at the respective components in Fig. 7. The waveform shaping circuit 22 of the supply signal generating unit 2 generates the shaping signal 22S whose central potential coincides with a potential V_A almost intermediate between an operating power supply potential

VDD of the circuit and ground potential ($0\text{ V} = \text{GND}$). In this case, when ground potential is used as a common potential, an offset corresponding to the central potential VA is present in the shaping signal 22S. The
5 offset removing circuit 23 removes this offset to generate and output the supply signal 2S whose central potential coincides with the common potential. As a consequence, no DC current is applied to the object 10, and a signal whose central potential coincides with a
10 common potential can be obtained as the response signal 3S without any offset caused by the resistive component Rf of the object 10.

In this embodiment, in order to operate each signal processing circuit by using a single operating
15 power supply, i.e., an operation power supply only in the positive direction (negative direction) with respect to ground potential, the level shift circuit 41 of the waveform information detection unit 4A level-shifts the response signal 3S to make the amplitude of the response
20 signal 3S fall between ground potential and the operating power supply potential VDD, and outputs the resultant signal as the to-be-compared signal 41S.

In comparing the to-be-compared signal 41S with the reference signal 42S, the phase comparison
25 circuit 43 temporarily converts these analog signals into digital signals to make the logic circuit perform phase comparison. In converting analog signals into

digital signals, a method of amplifying the analog signals with high gains or comparing them with a predetermined threshold.

In this case, if the central potential of an analog signal does not coincide with a desired reference potential, an error occurs in the phase obtained from the digital signal. When, for example, an analog signal is amplified with a high gain, since the analog signal is digitized by making it saturate to either the operating power supply potential VDD or ground potential with a reference voltage serving as a threshold. If, therefore, the central potential of the analog signal deviates from the reference potential, the length of an interval of the analog signal in which the potential is higher than the reference potential becomes asymmetrical with the length of an interval of the signal in which the potential is lower than the reference potential. Even if the response signal 3S is a sine wave, therefore, the duty ratio of the obtained digital signal does not become 1 : 1, and an error occurs in a phase (the timing of a leading or trailing edge). This applies the same to a case wherein an analog signal is digitized by being compared with a predetermined threshold, i.e., a reference potential.

When, therefore, the response signal 3S is to be level-shifted by the level shift circuit 41 of the waveform information detection unit 4A, the response

signal 3S is level-shifted such that the central potential coincides with the reference signal. This can realize a single operating power supply and suppress the occurrence of the above phase error.

5 The reference signal 42S from the reference signal generating circuit 42 is digitized by the phase comparison circuit 43 in the same manner as described above. In this case, making the central potential of the reference signal 42S generated by the reference
10 signal generating circuit 42 coincide with the reference potential at the time of level shifting makes it possible to easily obtain a digital signal with very little phase shift and accurately detect a phase difference.

15 When a sine wave centered on a common potential such as ground potential is used as the supply signal 2S, the phase of the response signal 3S changes in accordance with the impedance of the object 10. By using a signal synchronized with the supply signal 2S as
20 the reference signal 42S and making the phase comparison circuit 43 compare the phase of the signal with that of the response signal 3S, i.e., the to-be-compared signal 41S, the detection signal 4AS is output, which has a phase difference ϕ corresponding to the capacitive
25 component of the impedance of the object 10 as a pulse width.

Since the phase comparison circuit 43 is

provided for the waveform information detection unit 4A to compare the phase of the response signal 3S with that of the reference signal 42S in this manner, a phase which changes in accordance with the intrinsic capacitive component of the object 10 can be detected as waveform information representing the waveform of the response signal 3S. This makes it possible to minutely detect an electrical characteristic of an object, information representing the imaginary component of the intrinsic impedance of the object 10 in this case, by using a phase comparison circuit such as a general comparator or logic circuit, which is a very simple circuit arrangement as compared with the prior art, without requiring a resistive element or capacitive element which requires a large area. This in turn can easily realize a reduction in the size of the biometric recognition apparatus and the formation of a chip.

In addition, the offset removing circuit 23 generates the supply signal 2S whose central potential coincides with a common potential and applies it to the object 10. The level shift circuit 41 then level-shifts the response signal 3S to make the central potential coincide with the reference potential to generate the to-be-compared signal 41S. Phase comparison is performed on the basis of the to-be-compared signal 41S. This makes it possible to separately set an operating power supply potential for a signal processing circuit

and a common potential with a relatively simple circuit arrangement. Therefore, for example, using ground potential as a common potential can improve noise resistance and allows the use of a single power supply as an operating power supply for the signal processing circuit. This makes it possible to reduce the layout area of the circuit as compared with a case wherein positive and negative power supplies are used. This in turn can reduce the manufacturing cost of the biometric recognition apparatus.

[Sixth Embodiment]

A biometric recognition apparatus according to the sixth embodiment of the present invention will be described next with reference to Fig. 9. Fig. 9 is a block diagram showing the biometric recognition apparatus according to the sixth embodiment of the present invention.

In this embodiment, the phase of a response signal 3S is detected as waveform information as in the fifth embodiment described above (see Fig. 7). The sixth embodiment, however, differs from the fifth embodiment in that a signal containing an offset with respect to a common potential is applied as a supply signal 2S to a detection element 1 to make a waveform information detection unit 4A correct an offset caused in the response signal 3S. Note that the same reference numerals as in Fig. 7 denote the same or equivalent

parts in Fig. 9.

A supply signal generating unit 2 is comprised of a frequency generating circuit 21 and waveform shaping circuit 22, but is not provided with the above
5 offset removing circuit 23.

The waveform information detection unit 4A is provided with an offset correction circuit 41A instead of the above level shift circuit 41. The offset correction circuit 41A corrects an offset caused in the
10 response signal 3S, i.e., the DC potential difference between the central potential of the response signal 3S and a reference potential, in accordance with a resistive component R_f of an object 10.

The operation of the biometric recognition
15 apparatus according to this embodiment will be described next with reference to Figs. 10A to 10E. Figs. 10A to 10E show signal waveform examples at the respective components of the biometric recognition apparatus in Fig. 9.

20 The waveform shaping circuit 22 of the supply signal generating unit 2 generates and outputs the supply signal 2S whose central potential coincides with a potential V_A almost intermediate between an operating power supply potential V_{DD} of the circuit and ground
25 potential ($0\text{ V} = \text{GND}$). As a consequence, a DC current is applied to the object 10, and the response signal 3S becomes a signal containing the offset caused by the

resistive component R_f of the object 10. Assume that when R_f is a predetermined value, the central potential of the response signal 3S becomes a reference potential V_B . In this case, if R_f is larger than the

5 predetermined value, V_{B2} higher than the reference potential V_B becomes the central potential. If R_f is smaller than the predetermined value, V_{B1} lower than the reference potential V_B becomes the central potential.

In this embodiment, the offset correction
10 circuit 41A of the waveform information detection unit 4A level-shifts the response signal 3S to make the amplitude of the response signal 3S fall between ground potential and the operating power supply potential V_{DD} , and outputs the resultant signal as a to-be-compared
15 signal 41S, thereby allowing the subsequent circuit to operate on a single operating power supply, i.e., an operating power supply only in the positive direction (negative direction) with respect to ground potential.

In this case, causing the offset correction
20 circuit 41A to level-shift the response signal 3S so as to make the central potential coincide with the reference potential V_B used for phase comparison makes it possible not only to realize a single operating power supply, but also to suppress the occurrence of a phase
25 error in the above digitizing operation.

In this manner, the waveform information detection unit 4A is provided with a phase comparison

circuit 43 to compare the phase of the response signal 3S with the reference signal 42S, thereby detecting a phase which changes in accordance with the intrinsic capacitive component of the object 10 as waveform
5 information representing the waveform of the response signal 3S. This makes it possible to minutely detect an electrical characteristic of an object, information representing the imaginary component of the intrinsic impedance of the object 10 in this case, by using a
10 phase comparison circuit such as a general comparator or logic circuit, which is a very simple circuit arrangement as compared with the prior art, without requiring a resistive element or capacitive element which requires a large area. This in turn can easily
15 realize a reduction in the size of the biometric recognition apparatus and the formation of a chip.

In addition, the offset correction circuit 41A generates the to-be-compared signal 41S by correcting the offset of the response signal 3S so as to make the
20 central potential become the reference potential. Phase comparison is then performed on the basis of the to-be-compared signal 41S. This makes it possible to separately set an operating power supply potential for a signal processing circuit and a common potential with a
25 relatively simple circuit arrangement. Therefore, for example, using ground potential as a common potential can improve noise resistance and allows the use of a

single power supply as an operating power supply for the signal processing circuit. This makes it possible to reduce the layout area of the circuit as compared with a case wherein positive and negative power supplies are
5 used. This in turn can reduce the manufacturing cost of the biometric recognition apparatus.

[Seventh Embodiment]

A biometric recognition apparatus according to the seventh embodiment of the present invention will be
10 described next with reference to Fig. 11. Fig. 11 is a block diagram showing the biometric recognition apparatus according to the seventh embodiment of the present invention.

In this embodiment, the phase of a response
15 signal 3S is detected as waveform information as in the sixth embodiment described above (see Fig. 9). The seventh embodiment however differs from the sixth embodiment in that a reference potential supply unit 6 is provided to supply a common potential equal to the
20 central potential of a supply signal 2S to a detection element 1. The same reference numerals as in Fig. 9 denote the same or equivalent parts in Fig. 11.

The reference potential supply unit 6 is a circuit which detects the central potential of the
25 supply signal 2S generated by a supply signal generating unit 2, generates a reference potential VB equal to the central potential, and supplies the reference potential

to a detection electrode 11 of the detection element 1
with a low impedance. In this case, as the supply
signal 2S, an intermediate potential between an
operating power supply potential VDD for each signal
5 circuit and ground potential is used, and the reference
potential also becomes equal to the intermediate
potential.

Note that a waveform information detection
unit 4A is comprised of a reference signal generating
10 circuit 42 and phase comparison circuit 43, but is not
provided with the above offset correction circuit 41A.

The operation of the biometric recognition
apparatus according to this embodiment will be described
next with reference to Figs. 12A to 12D. Figs. 12A to
15 12D show signal waveform examples at the respective
components of the biometric recognition apparatus in
Fig. 11.

A waveform shaping circuit 22 of the supply
signal generating unit 2 generates and outputs the
20 supply signal 2S whose central potential coincides with
an intermediate potential between the operating power
supply potential VDD for the circuit and ground
potential. The reference potential supply unit 6
detects the central potential of the supply signal 2S
25 and supplies the reference potential VB equal to the
detected potential to the detection electrode 11. With
this operation, no DC current is applied to an object

10, and the response signal 3S becomes a signal whose central potential coincides with the reference potential VB.

5 In this case, the reference potential VB is used as a reference potential used for the phase comparison circuit 43, and the response signal 3S is directly input to the phase comparison circuit 43, in which the phase of the response signal 3S is compared with that of a reference signal 42S.

10 In this manner, the waveform information detection unit 4A is provided with the phase comparison circuit 43 to compare the phase of the response signal 3S with the reference signal 42S, thereby detecting a phase which changes in accordance with the intrinsic
15 capacitive component of the object 10 as waveform. information representing the waveform of the response signal 3S. This makes it possible to minutely detect an electrical characteristic of an object, information representing the imaginary component of the intrinsic
20 impedance of the object 10 in this case, by using a phase comparison circuit such as a general comparator or logic circuit, which is a very simple circuit arrangement as compared with the prior art, without requiring a resistive element or capacitive element
25 which requires a large area. This in turn can easily realize a reduction in the size of the biometric recognition apparatus and the formation of a chip.

In addition, since a reference potential equal to the central potential of the supply signal 2S is supplied as a common potential for the detection element 1 from the reference potential supply unit 6, a desired
5 detection signal having waveform information corresponding to the impedance of an object can be obtained with a relatively simple circuit arrangement using a single power supply instead of positive and negative power supplies. This makes it possible to
10 reduce the layout area of the circuit as compared with a case wherein positive and negative power supplies are used. This in turn can reduce the manufacturing cost of the biometric recognition apparatus.

[Eighth Embodiment]

15 A biometric recognition apparatus according to the eighth embodiment of the present invention will be described next with reference to Fig. 13. Fig. 13 is a block diagram showing the biometric recognition apparatus according to the eighth embodiment of the
20 present invention.

In this biometric recognition apparatus, a waveform information detection unit 4B detects the amplitude of a response signal 3S as the above waveform information, and outputs a detection signal 4BS
25 containing the waveform information. This embodiment differs from the fifth embodiment (see Fig. 7) in that the waveform information detection unit 4B includes a

maximum voltage detection circuit 45. Note that the same reference numerals as in Fig. 7 denote the same or equivalent parts in Fig. 13.

The maximum voltage detection circuit 45
5 detects an intrinsic impedance characteristic of an object 10, an amplitude change corresponding to a resistive component, from the response signal 3S whose central potential coincides with a common potential such as ground potential, and outputs the resultant
10 information as the detection signal 4BS. Practical examples of the maximum voltage detection circuit 45 include a sample/hold circuit and the like. Note that the arrangement of the biometric recognition apparatus in Fig. 13 is the same as that shown in Fig. 7 except
15 for the waveform information detection unit 4B, and a detailed description thereof will be omitted.

The operation of the biometric recognition apparatus in Fig. 13 will be described. The object 10 is connected to the output stage of a current-voltage
20 conversion circuit 31 through detection electrodes 11 and 12 of a detection element 1. In this case, the intrinsic impedance of the object 10 can be represented by a capacitive component C_f and resistive component R_f connected between the detection electrodes 11 and 12 of
25 the detection element 1. Therefore, a supply signal 2S applied from the current-voltage conversion circuit 31 with a predetermined output impedance is voltage-divided

by the output impedance of the current-voltage
conversion circuit 31 and the intrinsic impedance of the
object 10. The current flowing in the object 10 then
changes in phase or amplitude in accordance with the
5 intrinsic impedance of the object 10. Such a change is
converted into a voltage and output as the response
signal 3S.

In this embodiment, the maximum voltage
detection circuit 45 of the waveform information
10 detection unit 4B outputs the detection signal 4BS
containing the amplitude peak value of the response
signal 3S.

Figs. 14A to 14D show signal waveform examples
at the respective components in Fig. 13. A waveform
15 shaping circuit 22 of a supply signal generating unit 2
generates a shaping signal 22S whose central potential
coincides with a potential VA almost intermediate
between an operating power supply potential VDD for the
circuit and ground potential ($0\text{ V} = \text{GND}$). An offset
20 removing circuit 23 then outputs the supply signal 2S
whose central potential coincides with the common
potential.

With this operation, the response signal 3S
becomes a signal whose central potential coincides with
25 the common potential, and the amplitude changes in
accordance with the impedance of the object 10. The
maximum voltage detection circuit 45 detects the maximum

voltage value of the response signal 3S, and outputs the detection signal 4BS representing a DC potential proportional to an amplitude A of the response signal 3S.

5 In this manner, the waveform information detection unit 4B is provided with maximum voltage detection circuit 45 to detect an amplitude which changes in accordance with the intrinsic resistive component of the object 10 as waveform information
10 representing the waveform of the response signal 3S. This makes it possible to minutely detect an electrical characteristic of an object, information representing the real component of the intrinsic impedance of the object 10 in this case, by using a peak voltage
15 detection circuit such as a general sample/hold circuit, which is a very simple circuit arrangement as compared with the prior art, without requiring a resistive element or capacitive element which requires a large area. This in turn can easily realize a reduction in
20 the size of the biometric recognition apparatus and the formation of a chip.

 In addition, since the supply signal 2S whose central potential coincides with the common potential is generated by the offset removing circuit 23 and applied
25 to the object 10, when ground potential is used as the common potential, the amplitude of the response signal 3S corresponding to the object 10 can be obtained by

only making the maximum voltage detection circuit 45
detect the maximum voltage of the response signal 3S.
Therefore, for example, using ground potential as a
common potential can improve noise resistance and allows
5 the use of a single power supply as an operating power
supply for the signal processing circuit. This makes it
possible to reduce the layout area of the circuit as
compared with a case wherein positive and negative power
supplies are used. This in turn can reduce the
10 manufacturing cost of the biometric recognition
apparatus.

[Ninth Embodiment]

A biometric recognition apparatus according to
the ninth embodiment of the present invention will be
15 described next with reference to Fig. 15. Fig. 15 is a
block diagram showing the biometric recognition
apparatus according to the ninth embodiment of the
present invention.

In this embodiment, the amplitude of a
20 response signal 3S as waveform information is detected
as in the eighth embodiment described above (see
Fig. 13). The ninth embodiment differs from the eighth
embodiment in that a waveform information detection unit
4B detects the amplitude of the response signal 3S by
25 comparing the peak voltage value of the response signal
3S with the central potential value. Note that the same
reference numerals as in Fig. 7 denote the same or

equivalent parts in Fig. 15.

The waveform information detection unit 4B is comprised of a peak voltage detection circuit 46, central voltage detection circuit 47, and voltage comparison circuit 48. The peak voltage detection circuit 46 detects a peak voltage value 46S of the response signal 3S. The central voltage detection circuit 47 detects a central voltage value 47S of the response signal 3S. The voltage comparison circuit 48 compares the peak voltage value 46S with the central voltage value 47S and detects the amplitude of the response signal 3S from the voltage difference between them. The voltage comparison circuit 48 then outputs a detection signal 4BS containing the detected amplitude as waveform information.

Note that a supply signal generating unit 2 is comprised of a frequency generating circuit 21 and waveform shaping circuit 22 but is not provided with the above offset removing circuit 23.

The operation of the biometric recognition apparatus according to this embodiment will be described next with reference to Figs. 16A to 16C. Figs. 16A to 16C show signal waveform examples at the respective components of the biometric recognition apparatus in Fig. 15.

A waveform shaping circuit 22 of the supply signal generating unit 2 outputs a supply signal 2S

whose central potential coincides with a voltage VA almost intermediate between an operating power supply potential VDD for the circuit and ground potential (0 V = GND). As a consequence, a DC current is applied to
5 the object 10, and the response signal 3S becomes a signal containing an offset caused by the resistive component Rf of the object 10.

In this embodiment, the waveform information detection unit 4B is provided with the peak voltage
10 detection circuit 46 and central voltage detection circuit 47 to detect the peak voltage value 46S and central voltage value 47S of the response signal 3S, and the voltage comparison circuit 48 detects the amplitude of the response signal 3S by comparing them. In this
15 case, the peak voltage value may be the maximum or minimum voltage value of the response signal 3S.

In this manner, the waveform information detection unit 4B detects an amplitude which changes in accordance with the intrinsic resistive component of the
20 object 10 as waveform information representing the waveform of the response signal 3S. This makes it possible to minutely detect an electrical characteristic of an object, information representing the real component of the intrinsic impedance of the object 10 in
25 this case, by using a peak voltage detection circuit such as a general sample/hold circuit, which is a very simple circuit arrangement as compared with the prior

art, without requiring a resistive element or capacitive element which requires a large area. This in turn can easily realize a reduction in the size of the biometric recognition apparatus and the formation of a chip.

5 In addition, since the peak voltage detection circuit 46 and central voltage detection circuit 47 detect the peak voltage value 46S and central voltage value 47S of the response signal 3S, and the voltage comparison circuit 48 detects the amplitude of the
10 response signal 3S by comparing them, the amplitude of the response signal 3S can be detected regardless of the central potential of the response signal 3S. Therefore, for example, using ground potential as a common potential can improve noise resistance and allows the
15 use of a single power supply as an operating power supply for the signal processing circuit. This makes it possible to reduce the layout area of the circuit as compared with a case wherein positive and negative power supplies are used. This in turn can reduce the
20 manufacturing cost of the biometric recognition apparatus.

 In this embodiment, a maximum voltage detection circuit and minimum voltage detection circuit may be used in place of the peak voltage detection
25 circuit 46 and central voltage detection circuit 47, and the voltage comparison circuit 48 may detect an amplitude B of the response signal 3S by using the

maximum voltage value and minimum voltage value of the response signal 3S which are obtained from these circuits, as shown in Figs. 17A and 17B. With this arrangement, the same functions and effects as those
5 described above can be obtained.

Each of the fifth to ninth embodiments described above has exemplified the case wherein either a phase difference or an amplitude is detected by the waveform information detection unit 4 (4A, 4B).
10 However, both a phase difference and an amplitude may be concurrently detected, and the biometric recognition unit 5 may determine on the basis of the respective detection signals whether the object 10 is a living body. This makes it very difficult to separately adjust
15 the real component and imaginary component of an object by selecting a material and quality for the object, thereby obtaining high security against fraudulent recognition activities using an artificial finger and the like.

20 In this case, if one of the fifth to seventh embodiments is combined with the eight or ninth embodiment, for example, the noise resistance can be improved by using ground potential as a common potential. In addition, a single power supply can be
25 used as an operating power supply for the signal processing circuit. This makes it possible to reduce the layout area of the circuit as compared with a case

wherein positive and negative power supplies are used. This in turn can reduce the manufacturing cost of the biometric recognition apparatus.

In this case, in the eighth embodiment (see Fig. 13), the central potential of the response signal 3S preferably coincides with ground potential, and hence the eighth embodiment can be easily combined with the fifth embodiment (see Fig. 7) which uses ground potential as a common potential. In the ninth embodiment (see Fig. 15), the response signal 3S is preferably present between the operating power supply potential and ground potential, and hence the ninth embodiment can be easily combined with the sixth embodiment (see Fig. 9) or the seventh embodiment (see Fig. 11).

[10th Embodiment]

A biometric recognition apparatus according to the 10th embodiment of the present invention will be described next with reference to Fig. 18. Fig. 18 is a block diagram showing the biometric recognition apparatus according to the 10th embodiment of the present invention.

This biometric recognition apparatus is provided with a detection element 1, supply signal generating unit 2, response signal generating unit 3, waveform information detection unit 4, biometric recognition unit 5, and control unit 6.

In this embodiment, when biometric recognition is to be performed on the basis of the impedance of an object, biometric recognition is performed on the basis of waveform information representing the impedance, and
5 biometric recognition is also performed on the basis of a plurality of pieces of biometric information detected at different frequencies. Note that the same reference numerals as in the first embodiment (see Fig. 1) denote the same or equivalent parts in the 10th embodiment.

10 The detection element 1 electrically contacts an object 10 through a detection electrode, and connects the capacitive and resistive components of the impedance of the object 10 to the response signal generating unit 3. The supply signal generating unit 2 generates a
15 supply signal 2S formed from a sine wave having a predetermined frequency on the basis of a frequency control signal 61S from the control unit 6, and outputs the signal to the response signal generating unit 3. The response signal generating unit 3 applies the supply
20 signal 2S from the supply signal generating unit 2 to the detection element 1, and outputs, to the waveform information detection unit 4, a response signal 3S which changes in accordance with the output impedance of the detection element 1, i.e., the capacitive and resistive
25 components of the impedance of the object 10.

The waveform information detection unit 4 detects a phase difference or an amplitude of the supply

signal 2S from the waveform represented by the response
signal 3S from the response signal generating unit 3,
and outputs a detection signal 4S containing waveform
information representing such a phase difference or
5 amplitude to the biometric recognition unit 5. The
biometric recognition unit 5 recognizes/determines, on
the basis of the waveform information contained in the
detection signal 4S from the waveform information
detection unit 4 which is obtained for each of the
10 supply signals 2S having different frequencies, whether
or not the object 10 is a living body, and outputs a
recognition result 5S. The control unit 6 is comprised
of a CPU, a logic circuit, and the like, and outputs the
frequency control signal 61S and a determination control
15 signal 62S at a predetermined timing.

The operation of the biometric recognition
apparatus according to this embodiment will be described
next. The object 10 is connected to the output stage of
the response signal generating unit 3 through the
20 detection element 1. In this case, the intrinsic
impedance of the object 10 can be represented by the
capacitive and resistive components connected between
the output stage of the response signal generating unit
3 and a common potential (low impedance) such as ground
25 potential through the detection element 1.

The supply signal 2S applied from the response
signal generating unit 3 with a predetermined output

impedance is therefore voltage-divided by the output impedance and the intrinsic impedance of the object 10. The current flowing in the object 10 then changes in phase or amplitude in accordance with the intrinsic
5 impedance of the object 10. Such a change is converted into a voltage and output as the response signal 3S.

The response signal 3S is input to the waveform information detection unit 4, in which the above change in phase or amplitude is detected as the
10 information of a waveform, i.e., waveform information. In this case, as indicated by the signal waveform charts of Figs. 19A to 19D, a phase difference ϕ between the supply signal 2S and the response signal 3S can be detected by comparing the phase of a reference signal
15 synchronized with the supply signal 2S with the response signal 3S using, for example, a phase comparison circuit. In addition, as shown in Figs. 20A to 20C, by measuring the maximum voltage value of the response signal 3S using, for example, a sample/hold circuit, an
20 amplitude V of the response signal 3S can be detected.

The detection signal 4S containing the waveform information detected in this manner is output from the waveform information detection unit 4.

The biometric recognition unit 5 compares the
25 recognition index value obtained from the waveform information contained in the detection signal 4S from the waveform information detection unit 4 with a

reference range indicating the recognition index values of the authentic living body to recognize/determine whether or not the object 10 is a living body. The biometric recognition unit 5 then outputs the
5 recognition result 5S to the object 10.

In this case, the biometric recognition unit 5 determines whether or not the object 10 is a living body, on the basis of the determination control signal 62S from the control unit 6, by using the recognition
10 index value obtained from each of the supply signals 2S having different frequencies. If all the recognition index values fall within the reference range, the biometric recognition unit 5 outputs the recognition result 5S indicating that the object 10 is the authentic
15 living body. If any one of the recognition index values falls outside the reference range, the biometric recognition unit 5 outputs the recognition result 5S indicating that the object 10 is not the authentic living body.

20 As described above, the impedance of the authentic living body can be represented by capacitive and resistive components. The magnitude of the impedance therefore changes with a change in frequency due to the capacitive component, i.e., the imaginary
25 component. As shown in Figs. 21A to 21D, therefore, at predetermined frequency $f = f_0$ and higher frequency $f = f_3$ ($f_0 < f_3$), the phase difference ϕ with respect to

the supply signal 2S which is obtained as the waveform information of the response signal 3S changes. In addition, as shown in Figs. 22A to 22D, at frequency $f = f_0$ and frequency $f = f_3$, the amplitude V obtained as the waveform information of the response signal 3S changes.

In comparing each recognition index value with a reference range, the biometric recognition unit 5 uses a reference range 50 indicating the recognition index values of the authentic living body for a measurement condition under which each recognition index value is obtained, i.e., each frequency f of the supply signal 2S, as shown in Fig. 23. This can realize high-precision recognition/determination using different measurement conditions for the object 10, thereby obtaining high security against fraudulent activities using an artificial finger and the like. Note that reference ranges for the respective measurement conditions may be set in the biometric recognition unit 5 in advance or information notified from the control unit 6 may be used.

In this manner, the waveform information detection unit 4 detects waveform information such as a phase difference or amplitude representing the waveform of the response signal 3S from the response signal 3S which has changed in accordance with the impedance of the object 10, and biometric recognition for the object 10 is performed on the basis of the recognition index

value obtained from the waveform information. This makes it possible to minutely detect information representing an electrical characteristic of the object by using a phase comparison circuit such as a general
5 comparator or logic circuit, which is a very simple circuit arrangement as compared with the prior art, without requiring a resistive element or capacitive element which requires a large area. This in turn can easily realize a reduction in the size of the biometric
10 recognition apparatus and the formation of a chip.

Since biometric recognition for the object 10 is performed by using a plurality of recognition index values obtained from the supply signals 2S having different frequencies, it is difficult to fake the
15 impedances at the respective frequencies. This can realize high-precision recognition/determination using different measurement conditions for the object 10, thereby obtaining high security against fraudulent activities using an artificial finger and the like.

20 In this case, biometric recognition is performed by using recognition index values at a plurality of discretely selected frequencies as measurement conditions for the acquisition of recognition index values, frequencies in this case. For
25 this reason, there is no need to perform determination by detecting continuous frequency characteristics in a frequency region having a width. This makes it possible

to shorten the time required for
recognition/determination operation and obtain
sufficient determination precision with a simple circuit
arrangement.

5 [11th Embodiment]

A biometric recognition apparatus according to
the 11th embodiment of the present invention will be
described next with reference to Fig. 24. Fig. 24 is a
block diagram showing the biometric recognition
10 apparatus according to the 11th embodiment of the
present invention.

The 10th embodiment (see Fig. 18) has
exemplified the case wherein measurement conditions for
the acquisition of recognition index values from the
15 object 10 are set by changing the frequency of the
supply signal 2S. In the 11th embodiment, measurement
conditions for the acquisition of recognition index
values from the object 10 are set by changing the
elapsed time from the start of the application of the
20 supply signal 2S. Note that the same reference numerals
as in Fig. 18 denote the same or equivalent parts in
Fig. 24.

A control unit 6 is comprised of a CPU, a
logic circuit, and the like, and outputs a supply
25 control signal 63S and determination control signal 64S
at a predetermined timing. A supply signal generating
unit 2 starts supplying the supply signal 2S having a

predetermined frequency on the basis of the supply control signal 63S from the control unit 6. In response to this operation, a response signal generating unit 3 starts applying the supply signal 2S to the object 10 through a detection element 1, and outputs a response signal 3S which has changed in phase and amplitude in accordance with the impedance of the object 10 to a waveform information detection unit 4. The waveform information detection unit 4 detects waveform information representing a phase difference or an amplitude of the supply signal 2S from the response signal 3S on the basis of the supply control signal 63S from the control unit 6, and outputs the information as a detection signal 4S. Note that the operation of the waveform information detection unit 4 is the same as that described above, and hence a description thereof will be omitted.

A biometric recognition unit 5 compares the recognition index value obtained by the waveform information detection unit 4 from the detection signal 4S with a reference range indicating the recognition index values of the authentic living body at the timing designated by the determination control signal 64S from the control unit 6, i.e., at each of different elapsed times from the start of the application of the supply signal 2S. If all the recognition index values fall within the reference range, a recognition result 5S

indicating that the object 10 is the authentic living body is output. If any one of the recognition index values falls outside the reference range, the recognition result 5S indicating that the object 10 is not the authentic living body is output.

As described above, the impedance of the authentic living body can be represented by capacitive and resistive components. In this case, the contact resistance between the detection element 1 and the living body changes with time due to perspiration from the skin of the living body and the like. As a consequence, the impedance of the object 10 changes when viewed from the detection element 1. As shown in Figs. 25A to 25C, therefore, a phase difference ϕ with respect to the supply signal 2S which is obtained as the waveform information of the response signal 3S changes between elapsed time $T = T_0$ from the start of the application of the supply signal 2S after the contact of the object 10 with the detection element 1 and elapsed time $T = T_3$ ($T_0 < T_3$) longer than elapsed time $T = T_0$. In addition, as shown in Figs. 26A to 26C, the amplitude V obtained as waveform information of the response signal 3S also changes between elapsed time $T = T_0$ and elapsed time $T = T_3$.

In comparing each recognition index value with a reference range, the biometric recognition unit 5 uses a reference range 51 indicating the recognition index

values of the authentic living body for a measurement condition under which each recognition index value is obtained, i.e., each elapsed time T from the start of the application of the supply signal 2S, as shown in Fig. 27. This can realize high-precision recognition/determination using different measurement conditions for the object 10, thereby obtaining high security against fraudulent activities using an artificial finger and the like. Note that reference ranges for the respective measurement conditions may be set in the biometric recognition unit 5 in advance or information notified from the control unit 6 may be used.

In this manner, the waveform information detection unit 4 detects waveform information such as a phase difference or amplitude representing the waveform of the response signal 3S from the response signal 3S which has changed in accordance with the impedance of the object 10, and biometric recognition for the object 10 is performed on the basis of the recognition index value obtained from the waveform information. This makes it possible to minutely detect information representing an electrical characteristic of the object by using a phase comparison circuit such as a general comparator or logic circuit, which is a very simple circuit arrangement as compared with the prior art, without requiring a resistive element or capacitive

element which requires a large area. This in turn can easily realize a reduction in the size of the biometric recognition apparatus and the formation of a chip.

Since biometric recognition for the object 10
5 is performed by using a plurality of recognition index values obtained at the respective elapsed times from the start of the application of the supply signal 2S, high-precision recognition/determination using different measurement conditions for the object 10 can be
10 realized, thereby obtaining high security against fraudulent activities using an artificial finger and the like.

In this case, biometric recognition is performed by using recognition index values at a
15 plurality of discretely selected elapsed times as measurement conditions for the acquisition of recognition index values, elapsed times in this case. For this reason, there is no need to perform determination by detecting continuous elapsed time
20 characteristics in an elapsed time region having a width. This makes it possible to shorten the time required for recognition/determination operation and obtain sufficient determination precision with a simple circuit arrangement.

25 Each of the 10th and 11th embodiments described above has exemplified the case wherein in performing comprehensive determination/recognition by

using a plurality of recognition index values, the biometric recognition unit 5 determines that the object 10 is the authentic living body, only when all the recognition index values fall within the reference range. However, the present invention is not limited to this. For example, comprehensive recognition/determination may be performed on the basis of a condition about the number of recognition index values, of the respective recognition index values, which are determined to fall within the reference range, for example, one, a predetermined number or more, or a majority. This can perform stable recognition/determination against accidental noise and the like.

Each of the 10th and 11th embodiments described above has exemplified the case wherein when each recognition index value is to be compared with a reference range, a reference range corresponding to each measurement condition is used. However, the present invention is not limited to this. For example, a common reference range covering the recognition index values of an authentic living body which are obtained in the respective measurement conditions may be used. This makes it possible to simplify the circuit arrangement as compared with the case wherein determination is performed by using a plurality of reference ranges.

According to another method of making the

biometric recognition unit 5 perform comprehensive determination/recognition by using a plurality of recognition index values, a representative value of the respective recognition index values may be obtained by statistical processing, and determination recognition may be performed by comparing the representative value with a reference range indicating the recognition index values of the authentic living body. As this representative value, various kinds of statistical values such as a mean value, median value, maximum value, and minimum value can be used. This makes it possible to perform determination by using one reference range and hence simplify the circuit arrangement as compared with the case wherein determination is performed by using a plurality of reference ranges. In addition, using a statistical value, e.g., a mean value or median value, obtained from a plurality of recognition index values can realize stable recognition/determination against accidental noise.

Each of the 10th and 11th embodiments has exemplified the case wherein measurement conditions are set by changing the frequency of the supply signal 2S or the elapsed time from the start of the application of the supply signal. However, biometric recognition may be performed on the basis of a plurality of recognition index values obtained by combining these measurement conditions. This can realize biometric recognition with

higher precision and security. Note that measurement conditions are not limited to the frequency of the supply signal 2S and elapsed times, and other measurement conditions may be used.

5 Furthermore, each of the 10th and 11th embodiments has exemplified the case wherein as waveform information of the response signal 3S, a phase difference or amplitude is used. However, the waveform information detection unit 4 may detect both pieces of
10 waveform information, and the biometric recognition unit 5 may perform recognition/determination with respect to the respective recognition index values obtained from the two pieces of waveform information. This can realize biometric recognition with higher precision and
15 security.

[12th Embodiment]

A biometric recognition apparatus according to the 12th embodiment of the present invention will be described next with reference to Fig. 28. Fig. 28 is a
20 block diagram showing the biometric recognition apparatus according to the 12th embodiment of the present invention.

This biometric recognition apparatus is provided with a detection element 1, supply signal
25 generating unit 2, response signal generating unit 3, waveform information detection unit 4, and biometric recognition unit 5.

The detection element 1 electrically contacts an object 10 through a detection electrode, and connects the capacitive and resistive components of the impedance of the object 10 to the response signal generating unit 3. The supply signal generating unit 2 is comprised of a frequency generating circuit 2A and waveform shaping circuit 2B. The supply signal generating unit 2 generates an AC supply signal 2S by making the waveform shaping circuit 2B extract a desired frequency component from a rectangular wave signal 20S having a predetermined frequency which is generated by the frequency generating circuit 2A, and outputs the signal to the response signal generating unit 3. The response signal generating unit 3 applies the supply signal 2S from the supply signal generating unit 2 to the detection element 1 through a current-voltage conversion circuit 3A, and outputs, to the waveform information detection unit 4, a response signal 3S which changes in accordance with the output impedance of the detection element 1, i.e., a capacitive component C_f and resistive component R_f of the impedance of the object 10.

The waveform information detection unit 4 detects a phase difference or amplitude of the supply signal 2S from the waveform represented by the response signal 3S from the response signal generating unit 3, and outputs a detection signal 4S containing waveform information representing the phase difference or an

amplitude to the biometric recognition unit 5. In this case, the waveform information detection unit 4 may detect a phase which changes in accordance with the intrinsic capacitive component of the object 10 as waveform information representing the waveform of the response signal 3S by making a phase comparator or the like compare the phase of the response signal 3S with, for example, that of a predetermined reference signal such as the supply signal 2S. Alternatively, the waveform information detection unit 4 may detect an amplitude which changes in accordance with the intrinsic resistive component of the object 10 as waveform information representing the waveform of the response signal 3S by using a comparator and the like.

The biometric recognition unit 5 recognizes/determines on the basis of the waveform information contained in the detection signal 4S from the waveform information detection unit 4 whether or not the object 10 is a living body, and outputs a recognition result 5S.

The operation of the biometric recognition apparatus according to this embodiment will be described next. When the object 10 contacts terminals 11 and 12 of the detection element 1, the supply signal 2S applied from the supply signal generating unit 2 to the detection element 1 changes in accordance with the intrinsic impedance of the object 10, i.e., the

capacitive component C_f and resistive component R_f , and the resultant signal is output as the response signal 3S from the response signal generating unit 3. The waveform information detection unit 4 detects a phase difference or amplitude from the response signal 3S, and outputs a detection signal 4S containing information indicating the detection result to the biometric recognition unit 5.

The biometric recognition unit 5 recognizes/determines whether or not the object 10 is a living body, on the basis of whether or not the waveform information contained in the detection signal 4S falls within the reference range of the waveform information of the authentic living body, and outputs the recognition result 5S.

As described above, in this embodiment, the waveform information detection unit 4 is provided to detect waveform impedance representing a phase difference or an amplitude of the response signal 3S so as to detect information representing the real or imaginary component of the intrinsic impedance of the object 10. The biometric recognition unit 5 then determines on the basis of the detected information whether or not the object 10 is a living body. This makes it possible to closely examine an electrical characteristic of an object with a relatively simple circuit arrangement which detects waveform information,

as compared with the prior art, without requiring any external components such as transistors, inductances, and capacitances. This in turn can realize a reduction in the size of the biometric recognition apparatus and
5 the formation of a chip.

In addition, since the waveform information detection unit 4 detects waveform information representing a phase difference with respect to the response signal 3S or an amplitude without using any
10 impedance matching with the object 10, there is no need to use a high-precision sine wave signal without any distortion as the supply signal 2S. In this embodiment, therefore, the supply signal generating unit 2 generates the supply signal 2S formed from a pseudo sine wave by
15 making the waveform shaping circuit 2B extract a desired frequency component from the rectangular wave signal 20S generated by the frequency generating circuit 2A. This makes it possible to greatly reduce the circuit arrangement size as compared with a circuit which
20 generates a high-precision sine wave signal. This in turn can realize a reduction in the size of the biometric recognition apparatus and the formation of a chip.

Fig. 29 shows an example of the circuit
25 arrangement of the waveform shaping circuit 2B. The waveform shaping circuit 2B is comprised of a first driving circuit 21, low-pass filter 22, and second

driving circuit 23.

The first driving circuit 21 is formed from a buffer circuit such as an inverter circuit which serves to drive the subsequent circuit. The first driving
5 circuit 21 receives the rectangular wave signal 20S output from the frequency generating circuit 2A and outputs a rectangular wave signal 21S with a low impedance. Note that as the frequency generating circuit 2A, for example, a known pulse generating
10 circuit using a quartz oscillator may be used.

As the low-pass filter 22, an RC low-pass filter like the one shown in Fig. 30 may be used. Although this circuit example is comprised of a resistive element R and capacitive element C, the
15 low-pass filter may have an arrangement using only capacitance or resistance which is latent in the circuit. The low-pass filter 22 extracts a desired frequency component from the rectangular wave signal 21S and obtains a low-frequency signal 22S having a waveform
20 obtained by rounding the rectangular pulse.

The second driving circuit 23 is formed from a circuit for driving the subsequent circuit as in the case with the first driving circuit 21, and outputs the signal output from the low-pass filter 22 as the supply
25 signal 2S with a low impedance. As the second driving circuit 23, for example, an impedance conversion circuit having an arrangement in which the inverting input of a

differential amplification circuit is connected to the output.

As described above, since the low-pass filter 22 which extracts a desired low-frequency component from the rectangular wave signal 20S from the frequency generating circuit 2A is used as the waveform shaping circuit 2B, for example, the desired supply signal 2S can be obtained with a very simple circuit arrangement like that is constituted by the resistive element R and capacitive element C. This can realize a reduction in the biometric recognition apparatus and the formation of a chip.

In addition, the conventional digital waveform generating circuit needs to use an A/D converter and memory each requiring a mount area of several mm square. In contrast, according to this embodiment, the circuit can be mounted in an area of several 10 μ m square.

[13th Embodiment]

A biometric recognition apparatus according to the 13th embodiment of the present invention will be described next with reference to Fig. 31. Fig. 31 shows an example of the circuit arrangement of a waveform shaping circuit 2B used in the biometric recognition apparatus according to the 13th embodiment. The biometric recognition apparatus according to this embodiment is equivalent to the above biometric recognition apparatus shown in Fig. 28 which uses the

waveform shaping circuit 2B in Fig. 31. The arrangement of this embodiment is the same as that described above except for the waveform shaping circuit 2B, and hence a description thereof will be omitted.

5 The arrangement of the waveform shaping circuit 2B is the same as that of the above biometric recognition apparatus in Fig. 29 except that an amplitude limiting circuit 24 and amplification circuit 25 are added. The same reference numerals as in Fig. 29
10 denote the same or equivalent parts in Fig. 31.

 The amplitude limiting circuit 24 is a circuit which limits the amplitude of a rectangular wave signal 21S and outputs a rectangular wave limited signal 24S. The amplification circuit 25 is a circuit which
15 amplifies a signal obtained from a low-pass filter 22 and outputs the resultant signal as an amplified signal 25S to a second driving circuit 23.

 With this operation, the limited signal 24S smaller in amplitude than the rectangular wave signal
20 21S passes through the low-pass filter 22. This makes it possible to reduce the resistance value of a resistive element or the capacitance value of a capacitive element which is used in the low-pass filter 22, thus reducing the layout area required to form such
25 circuit elements on a chip.

 Fig. 32 shows an example of the circuit arrangement of the amplitude limiting circuit. The

amplitude limiting circuit 24 is comprised of an
inverter circuit 200, first reference voltage generating
circuit 201, second reference voltage generating circuit
202, first switch element 211, and second switch element
5 212.

The inverter circuit 200 outputs the
rectangular wave signal 21S upon inverting its logical
value. The first switch element 211 performs switching
(ON/OFF) operation in accordance with an inverted output
10 from the inverter circuit 200, and intermittently
outputs a first reference voltage V_{ref1} as the limited
signal 24S from the first reference voltage generating
circuit 201. The second switch element 212 performs
switching (ON/OFF) operation in accordance with the
15 rectangular wave signal 21S, and intermittently outputs
a second reference voltage V_{ref2} as the limited signal
24S from the second reference voltage generating circuit
202.

As shown in Fig. 33, the first reference
20 voltage V_{ref1} is set at a potential between a central
potential $V3$ of the input rectangular wave signal 21S
and a first common potential $V1$ (LOW level potential),
and the second reference voltage V_{ref2} is set at a
potential between the central potential $V3$ of the
25 rectangular wave signal 21S and a second common
potential $V2$ (HIGH level potential: $V2 > V1$). Note that
as these common potentials, low impedance potentials

such as various kinds of power supply potentials are used.

In this case, since the first switch element 211 and second switch element 212 are controlled by opposite logic signals, they perform switching operation in opposite phases. As a consequence, as shown in Fig. 33, the first reference voltage Vref1 and second reference voltage Vref2 are alternately output at opposite timings. The amplitude of the rectangular wave signal 21S is limited to a value between the first reference voltage Vref1 and the second reference voltage Vref2, and the resultant signal is output as the limited signal 24S.

In this manner, in the inverter circuit 200, the two switching elements 211 and 212 are made to alternately perform switching operation to alternately output the first reference voltage Vref1 and the second reference voltage Vref2. This makes it possible to limit the amplitude of the rectangular wave signal 21S with a very simple circuit arrangement, thus reducing the layout area of the circuit.

Note that as the switching elements 211 and 212, semiconductor elements such as MOSFETs may be used. [14th Embodiment]

A biometric recognition apparatus according to the 14th embodiment of the present invention will be described next with reference to Fig. 34. Fig. 34 shows

an example of the circuit arrangement of an amplitude limiting circuit 24 used in the biometric recognition apparatus according to the 14th embodiment. The biometric recognition apparatus according to this
5 embodiment is equivalent to the above biometric recognition apparatus in Fig. 28 which has a waveform shaping circuit 2B in Fig. 31 and further uses the amplitude limiting circuit 24 in Fig. 34 as the amplitude limiting circuit 24. Note that the
10 arrangement of this embodiment is the same as that described above except for the amplitude limiting circuit 24, and a description thereof will be omitted.

The amplitude limiting circuit 24 differs from the above amplitude limiting circuit in Fig. 32 in that
15 it makes two switch elements having different polarities (control logics) alternately perform switching operation at opposite timings instead of making the two switch elements 211 and 212 perform switching operation in the inverter circuit 200.

20 The amplitude limiting circuit 24 is comprised of a first reference voltage generating circuit 201, second reference voltage generating circuit 202, first switch element 221, and second switch element 222. Referring to Fig. 34, an n-type MOSFET is used as the
25 first switch element 221, and a p-type MOSFET is used as the second switch element 222, which have different polarities (control logics).

A rectangular wave signal 21S is commonly input to the control terminals (gate terminals) of the first switch element 221 and second switch element 222. Their output terminals (drain terminals) are commonly
5 connected and output a limited signal 24S. The first reference voltage generating circuit 201 and second reference voltage generating circuit 202 are respectively connected to the input terminals (source terminals) of the switch elements.

10 Since the two switch elements 221 and 222 have different polarities, when the rectangular wave signal 21S is at LOW level (V_1), the first switch element 221 is set to a high impedance, and the second switch element 222 is set to a low impedance. Consequently, a
15 second reference voltage V_{ref2} is output as the limited signal 24S. When the rectangular wave signal 21S is set at HIGH level (V_2), since the first switch element 221 is set to a low impedance, and the second switch element 222 is set to a high impedance, a first reference
20 voltage V_{ref1} is output as the limited signal 24S.

With this operation, the amplitude of the rectangular wave signal 21S is limited to obtain the limited signal 24S like the one shown in Fig. 33.

Alternately performing switching operation at
25 opposite timings in accordance with the rectangular wave signal 21S by using the two switch elements with different polarities in this manner makes it possible to

further simplify the circuit arrangement of the amplitude limiting circuit as compared with the circuit arrangement in Fig. 32, thereby reducing the layout area of the circuit.

5 [15th Embodiment]

A biometric recognition apparatus according to the 15th embodiment of the present invention will be described next with reference to Fig. 35. Fig. 35 shows an example of the circuit arrangement of a waveform
10 shaping circuit 2B used in the biometric recognition apparatus according to the 15th embodiment. The biometric recognition apparatus according to this embodiment is equivalent to the above biometric recognition apparatus in Fig. 28 which uses the waveform
15 shaping circuit 2B in Fig. 35. Note that the arrangement of this embodiment is the same as that described above except for the waveform shaping circuit 2B, and hence a description thereof will be omitted.

The arrangement of the waveform shaping
20 circuit 2B is the same as that of the above waveform shaping circuit in Fig. 29 except that an amplitude limiting low-pass filter 26 is used in place of the low-pass filter 22, and an amplification circuit 25 is added. The same reference numerals as in Fig. 29 denote
25 the same or equivalent parts in Fig. 35.

The amplitude limiting low-pass filter 26 is a circuit having both the function of an amplitude

limiting circuit 24 which limits the amplitude of a rectangular wave signal 21S and the function of the low-pass filter 22 which extract a desired frequency component.

5 Fig. 36 shows an example of the circuit arrangement of the amplitude limiting low-pass filter 26. The amplitude limiting low-pass filter 26 is comprised of a first switch element 231, second switch element 232, first resistive element 233, and second
10 resistive element 234.

Referring to Fig. 36, an n-type MOSFET is used as the first switch element 231, and a p-type MOSFET is used as the second switch element 232, which have different polarities (control logics). As the first
15 resistive element 233 and second resistive element 234, polysilicon resistors or MOSFETs may be used.

The rectangular wave signal 21S is commonly input to the control terminals (gate terminals) of the first switch element 231 and second switch element 232.
20 Their output terminals (drain terminals) are connected to each other, and a limiting signal 26S is output from them. The input terminal (source terminal) of the first switch element 231 is connected to a first common potential V1 through the first resistive element 233.
25 The input terminal (source terminal) of the second switch element 232 is connected to a second common potential V2 through the second resistive element 234.

The two switch elements 231 and 232 have different polarities. When, therefore, the rectangular wave signal 21S is set at LOW level (V_1), the first switch element 231 is set to a high impedance, and the
5 second switch element 232 is set to a low impedance. Consequently, as shown in Fig. 37, a limited potential V_{p2} obtained by subtracting a voltage drop V_{r2} due to the second resistive element 234 from the second common potential V_2 is output as the limited signal 26S.

10 In this case, since the second switch element 232 is set to a low impedance through the second resistive element 234 with respect to the second common potential V_2 , the potential of the output terminal gradually changes. As a result, high-frequency
15 components are cut, and the waveform of the rectangular wave signal 21S is rounded to obtain the limited signal 26S.

When the rectangular wave signal 21S is set at HIGH level (V_2), the first switch element 231 is set to
20 a low impedance, and the second switch element 232 is set to a high impedance. As a consequence, as shown in Fig. 37, a limited potential V_{p1} obtained by adding a voltage drop V_{r1} due to the first resistive element 233 to the first common potential V_1 is output as the
25 limited signal 26S.

In this case as well, since the first switch element 231 is set to a low impedance through the first

resistive element 233 with respect to the first common potential V1, the potential of the output terminal gradually changes. As a result, high-frequency components are cut, and the waveform of the rectangular wave signal 21S is rounded to obtain the limited signal 26S.

Making the two switch elements having different polarities alternately perform switching operation at opposite timings in accordance with the rectangular wave signal 21S and alternately outputting two potentials through the resistors in this manner can realize both the function of limiting the function of the rectangular wave signal 21S and the function of extracting a desired low-frequency component from the rectangular wave signal 21S. This makes it possible to further simplify the circuit arrangement of the waveform shaping circuit as compared with the above circuit arrangement in Fig. 31, thereby reducing the layout area of the circuit.

[16th Embodiment]

A biometric recognition apparatus according to the 16th embodiment of the present invention will be described next with reference to Fig. 38. Fig. 38 shows an example of the circuit arrangement of an amplitude limiting circuit low-pass filter used in the biometric recognition apparatus according to the 16th embodiment. The biometric recognition apparatus according to this

embodiment is equivalent to the above biometric recognition apparatus in Fig. 28 which uses a waveform shaping circuit 2B in Fig. 35 and also uses an amplitude limiting low-pass filter as the amplitude limiting
5 low-pass filter 26. Note that the arrangement of this embodiment is the same as that described above except for the amplitude limiting low-pass filter 26, and a description thereof will be omitted.

The amplitude limiting low-pass filter 26 is
10 comprised of a first reference voltage generating circuit 201, second reference voltage generating circuit 202, first switch element 241, and second switch element 242.

A first reference voltage V_{ref1} is supplied to
15 the control terminal (gate terminal) of the first switch element 241. A rectangular wave signal 21S is input to the input terminal (source terminal) of the first switch element 241. A second reference voltage V_{ref2} is supplied to the control terminal (gate terminal) of the
20 second switch element 242. The output terminal (drain terminal) of the first switch element 241 is connected to the input terminal (source terminal) of the second switch element 242.

Referring to Fig. 38, a p-type MOSFET is used
25 as the first switch element 241, and an n-type MOSFET is used as the second switch element 242, which have different polarities (control logics).

As shown in Fig. 39, the first reference voltage V_{ref1} is set at a potential between a central potential $V3$ of the input rectangular wave signal 21S and a first common potential $V1$ (LOW level potential),
5 and the second reference voltage V_{ref2} is set at a potential between the central potential $V3$ of the rectangular wave signal 21S and a second common potential $V2$ (HIGH level potential: $V2 > V1$). Note that as a common potential for these components, a low
10 impedance potential, e.g., one of various kinds of power supply potentials is used.

When, therefore, the rectangular wave signal 21S is set at LOW level ($V1$), the input terminal (source terminal) of the first switch element 241 is set at the
15 first common potential $V1$. Since the control terminal (gate terminal) of the first switch element 241 is at the first reference voltage V_{ref1} , the first switch element 241 is set in a high impedance state. As a consequence, the output terminal (drain terminal) of the
20 first switch element 241 is set at a limited potential V_{p1} obtained by adding a threshold voltage V_{th1} of the first switch element 241 to the first reference voltage V_{ref1} .

In addition, since the control terminal (gate
25 terminal) of the second switch element 242 is at the second reference voltage V_{ref2} closer to the second common potential $V2$ and higher than the limited

potential V_{p1} , the second switch element 242 is set in a low impedance state. As a consequence, a limited signal 26S output from the output terminal (drain terminal) of the second switch element 242 is set at the limited
5 potential V_{p1} of the output terminal (drain terminal) of the first switch element 241.

When the rectangular wave signal 21S is set at HIGH level (V_2), the input terminal (source terminal) of the first switch element 241 is set at the second common
10 potential V_2 . Since the control terminal (gate terminal) of the first switch element 241 is at the first reference voltage V_{ref1} , the first switch element 241 is set in a low impedance state. As a consequence, the output terminal (drain terminal) of the first switch
15 element 241 is set at the second common potential V_2 .

Consequently, the input terminal (source terminal) of the second switch element 242 is set at the second common potential V_2 . Since the control terminal (gate terminal) of the second switch element 242 is at
20 the second reference voltage V_{ref2} , the second switch element 242 is set in a high impedance state. The output terminal (drain terminal) of the second switch element 242 is therefore set at a limited potential V_{p2} obtained by subtracting a threshold voltage V_{th2} of the
25 second switch element 242 from the second reference voltage V_{ref2} .

The amplitude of the input rectangular wave

signal 21S is therefore limited to a value between the limited potential V_{p1} and the limited potential V_{p2} , and the resultant signal is output as the limited signal 26S.

5 In this case, when the rectangular wave signal 21S shifts from LOW level (V_1) to HIGH level (V_2), the first switch element 241 changes from a high impedance state to a low impedance state in a relatively short period of time. On the other hand, since the control
10 terminal (gate terminal) of the second switch element 242 is at the second reference voltage V_{ref2} lower than the second common potential V_2 of the input terminal (source terminal), the driving force of the switch element decreases. As a consequence, it takes time for
15 the second switch element 242 to change from a low impedance state to a high impedance state.

 On the contrary, when the rectangular wave signal 21S shifts from HIGH level (V_2) to LOW level (V_1), since the control terminal (gate terminal) of the
20 first switch element 241 is at the first reference voltage V_{ref1} higher than the first common potential V_1 of the input terminal (source terminal), the driving force of the switch element decreases. As a consequence, it takes time for the first switch element
25 241 to change from a low impedance state to a high impedance state.

 The potential of the limited signal 26S

therefore gradually changes as the impedance of the rectangular wave signal 21S shifts. As a consequence, high-frequency components are cut, and the waveform of the rectangular wave signal 21S is rounded to obtain the limited signal 26S.

In this manner, the switch elements having different polarities are connected in series, and the first and second reference voltages are separately supplied to the control terminals of the respective elements to alternately perform switching operation at opposite timings in accordance with the rectangular wave signal 21S. This makes it possible to realize both the function of limiting the amplitude of the rectangular wave signal 21S and the function of extracting a desired low-frequency component from the rectangular wave signal 21S. This in turn can simplify the circuit arrangement of the waveform shaping circuit and reduce the layout area of the circuit.

[17th Embodiment]

A biometric recognition apparatus according to the 17th embodiment of the present invention will be described next with reference to Fig. 40. Fig. 40 is a block diagram showing the arrangement of the biometric recognition apparatus according to the 17th embodiment of the present invention. The same reference numerals as in Fig. 28 denote the same or equivalent parts in Fig. 40.

This biometric recognition apparatus has the same arrangement as that of the biometric recognition apparatus according to the 12th embodiment described above except that the apparatus is provided with a
5 frequency control unit 6 which indicates a supply signal 2S to be generated by a supply signal generating unit 2. Note that other arrangements are the same as those in the 12th embodiment, and hence a description thereof will be omitted.

10 The frequency control unit 6 is comprised of a CPU and logic circuit, and outputs a frequency control signal 6S at a predetermined timing. The supply signal generating unit 2 generates and outputs the supply
signal 2S having the frequency designated by the
15 frequency control signal 6S.

 With this operation, a biometric recognition unit 5 determines, by using the recognition index value obtained for each of supply signals 2S having different frequencies, whether or not an object 10 is a living
20 body. If all the recognition index values fall within a reference range, the biometric recognition unit 5 outputs a recognition result 5S indicating that the object 10 is the authentic living body. If any one of the recognition index values falls outside the reference
25 range, the biometric recognition unit 5 outputs the recognition result 5S indicating that the object 10 is not the authentic living body.

Since biometric recognition for the object 10 is performed by using a plurality of recognition index values obtained from the supply signals 2S having different frequencies, it is difficult to fake the impedances at the respective frequencies. This can realize high-precision recognition/determination using different measurement conditions for the object 10, thereby obtaining high security against fraudulent activities using an artificial finger and the like.

10 In this case, biometric recognition is performed by using recognition index values at a plurality of discretely selected frequencies as measurement conditions for the acquisition of recognition index values, frequencies in this case. For 15 this reason, there is no need to perform determination by detecting continuous frequency characteristics in a frequency region having a width. This makes it possible to shorten the time required for recognition/determination operation and obtain 20 sufficient determination precision with a simple circuit arrangement.

A waveform shaping circuit 2B will be described next with reference to Fig. 41. The frequency generating circuit 2A outputs a rectangular wave signal 25 20S having the frequency indicated by the frequency control signal 6S. For this reason, the waveform shaping circuit 2B must perform waveform shaping

processing to keep the amplitude of the supply signal 2S constant even if the frequency of the rectangular wave signal 20S input in accordance with the frequency control signal 6S changes.

5 The waveform shaping circuit 2B in Fig. 41 copes with each frequency by using a variable low-pass filter 27 in place of the low-pass filter of the waveform shaping circuit in Fig. 29 described above.

Fig. 42 shows an example of the arrangement of
10 the variable low-pass filter 27. The variable low-pass filter 27 uses a variable resistance circuit RV and variable capacitance circuit CV in place of the resistive element R and capacitive element C of the low-pass filter in Fig. 30, respectively, and outputs a
15 selection signal 60S from a variable element control circuit 250 in accordance with the frequency control signal 6S, thereby controlling the variable resistance circuit RV and variable capacitance circuit CV.

This allows the user of a low-pass filter with
20 a time constant corresponding to each of the rectangular wave signals 20S having different frequencies. Even if, therefore, the frequency of the input rectangular wave signal 20S changes, a low-frequency signal 27S with a constant amplitude can be obtained. As a consequence,
25 the supply signal 2S can be output while its amplitude is held constant.

Fig. 43 shows an example of the arrangement of

the variable capacitance circuit CV. The variable capacitance circuit CV is provided with a plurality of capacitance circuits 261 each constituted by a capacitive element and switch which are connected in series with each other. At least one of the capacitance circuits 261 is selected by a selection circuit 260 on the basis of the selection signal 60S.

Note that the variable resistance circuit RV can be realized by replacing the capacitive element of the variable capacitance circuit CV with a resistive element. Although this circuit example is comprised of the variable resistance circuit RV and variable capacitance circuit CV, the circuit may have an arrangement using only capacitance or resistance which is latent in the circuit.

Figs. 44A to 44C are signal waveform charts showing the operation of the waveform shaping circuit 2B. In this case, for the sake of easy understanding, assume that the resistance value of the variable resistance circuit RV is constant.

Fig. 44A shows a case wherein the rectangular wave signal 20S is a first frequency f_1 , and the capacitance value of the variable capacitance circuit CV is C_1 . Let A be the amplitude of the supply signal 2S used in this case.

Fig. 44B shows a case wherein the rectangular wave signal 20S is a second frequency f_2 ($f_2 > f_1$). In

this case, the second frequency f_2 is higher than the first frequency f_1 . If, therefore, the capacitance value of the variable capacitance circuit CV is kept C_1 , the time constant of the low-pass filter is not changed.

- 5 As the frequency increases, the attenuation of the signal increases. The amplitude of the obtained supply signal 2S becomes B smaller than A.

If, therefore, the supply signal 2S changes in accordance with a change in frequency, the frequency
10 dependence of the object 10 cannot be accurately detected by the biometric recognition unit 5.

For this reason, when the capacitance value of the variable capacitance circuit CV is changed to C_2 ($C_2 < C_1$) in accordance with the frequency f_2 , the time
15 constant of the low-pass filter is changed. As a consequence, as shown in Fig. 44C, the supply signal 2S having the same amplitude A as that set at the first frequency f_1 is obtained.

In this manner, the waveform shaping circuit
20 2B is provided with the variable low-pass filter 27 to adjust the time constant of the low-pass filter in accordance with the frequency control signal 6S representing the frequency of the rectangular wave signal 20S. Even if, therefore, the frequency of the
25 rectangular wave signal 20S is changed, the supply signal 2S having a desired amplitude can be generated. This makes it possible to accurately detect the

frequency dependence of the object 10 by using the biometric recognition unit 5. This in turn makes it possible to realize high-precision recognition/determination by using different measurement
5 conditions for the object 10, thereby obtaining high security against fraudulent recognition activities using an artificial finger and the like.

The above description has exemplified the case wherein the abstracted first common potential V1 and
10 second common potential V2 are used as operating potentials for the circuit. However, as these common potentials, arbitrary potentials can be used as long as they satisfy $V2 > V1$. More specifically, ground potential may be used as the first common potential V1,
15 and a power supply potential higher than ground potential may be used as the second common potential V2.